

Abstract of the disclosure:

A network-based service allows customers who receive television programming on cable or xDSL access links to view "video summaries" of that programming. A summary is an abbreviated version of a program. It may contain audio, snapshots, and full-motion video that have been extracted from a program. Alternatively, the content of a summary may be independent of the content of its associated program. Some key features of this service are: (1) A customer can view several summaries to choose a program for viewing. (2) "Video hyperlinks" allow a customer to efficiently view a segment from a program that is associated with a segment from a summary. These links may be "one-way" or "two-way". (3) "Interrupted viewing" allows a customer to view a summary of content that he or she missed during a broadcast. (4) "Live summaries" can be incrementally generated during live television broadcasts such as the Academy Awards, World Series, and Super Bowl. (5) A customer can use a summary to indicate the segments of a program that he or she wishes to record. One embodiment of this service for cable access utilizes enhancements to the set top boxes (STBs) at the customer premises. Specifically, a STB must: (1) receive programs and summaries from an AT&T POP, (2) use profile and history information to select the program and summary segments to be stored, and (3) provide a user interface for this service. Another embodiment of this service uses video summary servers (VSSs) at AT&T POPs to store programs and summaries for xDSL customers. In both embodiments, broadcasters transmit summaries that include the information required for the features of this invention. This is accomplished by using the capabilities outlined in the MPEG-2 standards for digital video.